

# *Improving the* **Xperience**

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report







# MISSION

GRTA works on behalf of the Governor to reduce congestion and improve mobility, and operates high-quality, efficient regional commuter services.

# VISION

GRTA is a lean, responsive state transportation authority working to improve Georgia's world-class transportation network.





## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When you think about transportation during the 2017 fiscal year, the collapse of the I-85 bridge and its impact on the movement of people and goods through Atlanta tops the list. While the collapse was an unusual and unanticipated challenge for commuters, commercial traffic and other motorists, the aftermath highlighted the responsiveness and collaboration that exist between the many players in the state's transportation network. We came together as a team to get people where they needed to go, with a side benefit of showcasing various commute options.

That ability to work together is critical as we focus on meeting future transportation needs. Our challenge is that of large metropolitan areas around the world – lots of people and their expectation to travel safely, reliably and quickly to their destination. Studies show that metro Atlanta's population will continue to increase and that residents view transportation as the biggest issue facing the region.

With the transfer of Xpress operations to the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) from the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), we have consolidated our commuter-facing operations for greater efficiency and are in the process of placing greater focus at the GRTA Board level on the key transportation planning and policy issues that will define how we approach and address metro Atlanta's mobility challenges.

GRTA has always had a focus on coordinated regional transportation planning both among the region's governmental entities and with developers planning projects within its 13-county jurisdiction. Through the GRTA Board's review and approval of the region's Transportation Improvement Program, GRTA plays a key role in ensuring that projects from cities, counties, MARTA and the Georgia Department of Transportation are coordinated and integrated. Through reviews of Developments of Regional Impact, SRTA planning and engineering staff working on behalf of GRTA review new development projects to understand their impact on the region's transportation network and provide recommendations to ensure that the projects account for and, where possible, enhance the movement of people and goods in the surrounding areas. Together, GRTA and SRTA provide a strategic alignment of two state entities that are focused almost exclusively on mobility.

The strength and benefit of this alignment were realized in the wake of the bridge collapse, as we were challenged to establish brand new Xpress service to MARTA rail stations, reroute existing service away from the impacted area on the morning after the collapse and communicate these changes to the public. I can't say enough good things about the staff who worked through the night – and for days and weeks afterward – to deal with the impacts to our Xpress and Peach Pass customers. As we all know now, the staff more than met the challenge.

I look forward to continuing to lead a great team of men and women who are dedicated and focused on meeting the transportation challenges in our state. And I look forward to having the privilege of working with the GRTA Board as it contemplates many tough and often times unenviable policy and planning decisions to improve mobility in the region. As you read through this report, you'll learn about some of the specific changes we've made to improve operations and some of the progress we have made toward our mission of connecting people, jobs and communities through preferred mobility options and innovative solutions. We look forward to working with you to continue our progress through fiscal year 2018.

Christopher Tomlinson  
GRTA Executive Director









## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As chair of the GRTA Board of Directors, I'm excited to reflect on the progress our agency has made this year as it impacts our customers. Transit continues to be an important topic in Georgia, with state leaders and others recognizing more and more the role that transit needs to play in addressing our mobility needs. This year, GRTA made huge strides forward in positioning our transit services, particularly the Xpress commuter coach service, as a solution to metro Atlanta's transportation challenges.

From the rehab of our commuter coaches to a new operations facility in Forest Park, much work was undertaken to ensure that our Xpress service not only meets but exceeds the expectations of its users.

One of the highlights was actually something that most of our riders will never see – construction of the 38,000 square foot operations and maintenance facility. I was proud to speak at the ribbon cutting of the building, which serves as the south hub for our transit operations. There we manage all of the operational needs for up to 98 buses and 12 Xpress routes. This facility allows for increased productivity and more efficient operations in a greatly enhanced work environment.

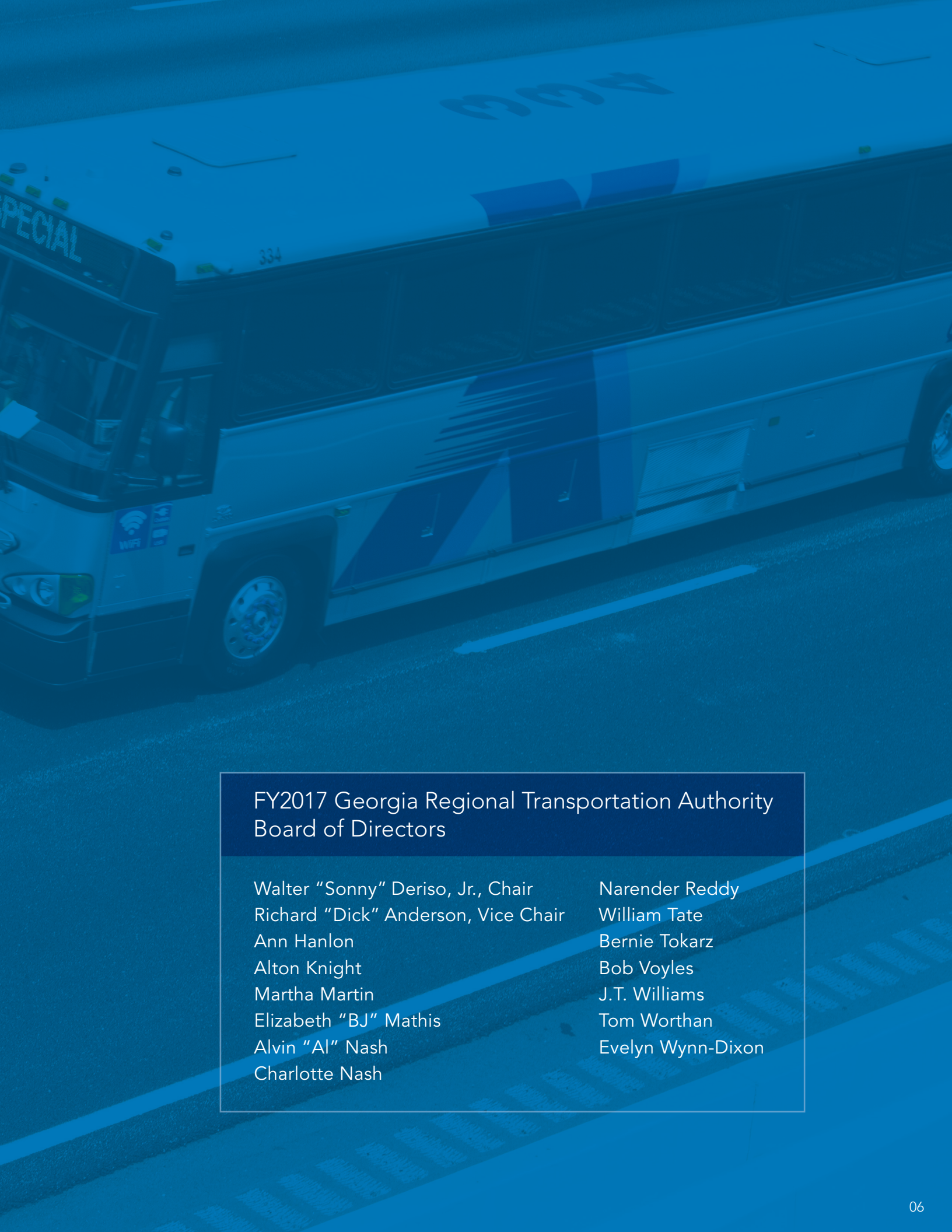
This fiscal year also saw the start of the rehab of our coaches. We are transitioning from the white buses to sleek silver coaches. However, this rehab is much more than just cosmetic! GRTA is adding upgraded amenities such as USB ports, Wi-Fi and onboard camera technology.

Upgraded buses and new operations facilities demonstrate GRTA's commitment to reinvesting in our assets in order to continue to provide a safe, reliable and high-quality transit experience for our customers.

Xpress has always been a unique and important part of the traffic solution. The work we do at GRTA will make sure that we continue to be an effective and reliable transportation option for commuters.

Sonny Deriso  
GRTA Chair





## FY2017 Georgia Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors

Walter "Sonny" Deriso, Jr., Chair  
Richard "Dick" Anderson, Vice Chair  
Ann Hanlon  
Alton Knight  
Martha Martin  
Elizabeth "BJ" Mathis  
Alvin "Al" Nash  
Charlotte Nash

Narender Reddy  
William Tate  
Bernie Tokarz  
Bob Voyles  
J.T. Williams  
Tom Worthan  
Evelyn Wynn-Dixon



A person with white hair and glasses is shown from the side, wearing a red sweater and reading a book. They are sitting in a car, with the car's interior and a window visible in the background. The image is used as a background for the text.

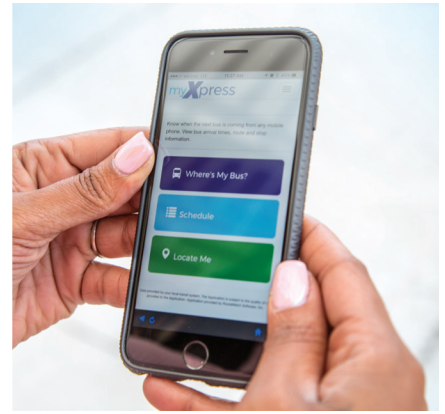
# Xceeding

EXPECTATIONS

*“I find that I can utilize my time better instead  
of having to concentrate on driving.”*

*— focus group participant*





## XPRESS PROVIDES STRESS-FREE COMMUTES

The Xpress commuter coach service provides commuters a valuable transportation option and also improves the capacity of Georgia's most congested highways.

The program underwent a comprehensive change known as Direct Xpress, which streamlined the Xpress system from 33 to 25 routes, interlining some routes to provide more frequency at existing Park and Ride lots for the purpose of improving service reliability, flexibility and understandability.

During this year, Xpress began rehabbing its model year 2004 coaches. The newly renovated coaches feature a new silver paint scheme and reflective details. The inside features USB ports, Wi-Fi, 120-volt power outlets to plug in laptops and phones, and new seat coverings. All of the mechanical systems and assemblies also were updated.

Xpress also added automated vehicle location (AVL) systems so riders receive information via the myXpress app about the arrival and the departure of coaches.

Xpress operated 166 buses and carried more than 1.8 million passenger trips, providing workers with reliable, stress-free commutes to and from major employment centers in Downtown, Midtown and Perimeter Center.



AS OF THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR,  
THE XPRESS SYSTEM CONSISTED OF

25

ROUTES FROM

27

PARK AND RIDE LOTS IN

12

METRO ATLANTA COUNTIES





THE XPRESS BUS AVERAGED 7,000 DAILY  
PASSENGER TRIPS SYSTEMWIDE

2,300

FROM THE NORTH

1,700

FROM THE EAST

2,100

FROM THE SOUTH

900

FROM THE WEST





# Xtending

OUR SERVICES

*“Been using the bus for about two months and I love it!”*

*– Facebook user Sunny Cavan Anderson*







## SOUTH OPERATIONS

In March 2017, GRTA opened a new Xpress Operations and Maintenance Facility known as South Ops, in Forest Park. The 38,000-square-foot facility handles operational needs for up to 98 buses and 12 Xpress routes.

### Upgraded Bays

- 12 maintenance bays (6 drive thru bays and 6 pull in bays)
- Engine dyno and brake tester
- Bays dedicated for quick lube and preventative maintenance (underground maintenance pit)
- Three bays with in-ground lifts for tire changing and other repairs that require the buses to be lifted up off the ground

### Sustainability Features

- LED lighting throughout facility
- Touchless bus wash: 70% of water is recycled
- LED technology with motion sensors for energy conservation
- LED lighting under the fueling canopy
- Infrared gas heaters in the shop
- Advanced ventilation system that is tied to carbon monoxide testing to control shop ventilation



THE 38,000-SQUARE-FOOT FACILITY HANDLES OPERATIONAL NEEDS FOR UP TO 98 BUSES AND 12 XPRESS ROUTES.



# Xploring

COMMUTE OPTIONS

*“It’s stress free. I can just get in and go.”*

*– focus group participant*

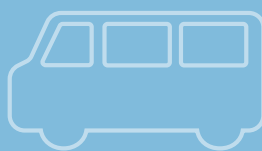






## VANPOOL

More than 1,700 average daily riders take advantage of the state's vanpool program, which provides affordable and convenient public transportation service that enables commuters with similar trip origins and destinations to share rides. GRTA works with partner agencies, such as the Atlanta Regional Commission and Georgia Commute Options, to ensure the vanpool program fits seamlessly within the region's overall efforts to provide transportation options.



831,253

PASSENGER TRIPS ANNUALLY

35,488,319

PASSENGER MILES

301

VANS USED ON AVERAGE



# Xceptional

SAFETY

*“Xpress is getting better every year. Keep it up!”*

*– Facebook user Mike Hammett*







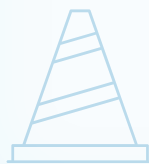
## INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

There are several programs in place to ensure the safety of Xpress passengers. The Park and Ride lots and buses are patrolled by security. There is closed circuit television on the fleet, which gives Xpress the ability to review video footage of the vehicles. The agency also has facilities staff who make daily visits to the Park and Ride lots to ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of the locations. Xpress's priority is safety, and passengers can be assured of having its best people looking out for them.



# 14,300

MILES BETWEEN ROAD CALLS ON AVERAGE



# Less than 1

PREVENTABLE ACCIDENT PER 100,000  
MILES PER MONTH



# Xpanding

REVENUE

*“I had an amazing experience. The buses were on schedule, drivers were capable and friendly, and using the breeze card was seamless and easy.”*

*– Facebook user Ada Moreau Demlow*



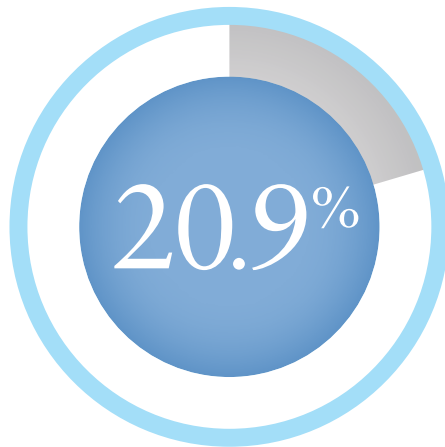




## FAREBOX REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Georgia uses its Xpress service as a strategic tool to help manage congestion, enhance mobility and generate revenue required for ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

Complete financial statements for 2016-17 can be found online at [www.srta.ga.gov/grta](http://www.srta.ga.gov/grta).



FAREBOX REVENUE CONTRIBUTED  
20.9% OF XPRESS OPERATING  
COSTS IN 2016-17

**\$4,973,131**

ANNUAL FAREBOX REVENUE

**\$23,750,489**

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES

Xpress spent an average of 54 cents per passenger mile to provide the commuter service in 2016-17.



